

You have a great idea plus the skills and passion to make it happen. That's excellent!

Please know this:

- It is **HIGHLY** likely that one or more organizations in our area are doing exactly what you want to do
- Those organizations will welcome your skills and passion

Yes, but you still want to start a nonprofit. OK. Nonprofit organizations provide programs and services that benefit the public. So, your **first step** is to describe in detail the specific group of people you will serve and the specific impact you wish to make. Please, **BE SPECIFIC**.

Once you have done that, your **second step** is to contact existing organizations doing the same or similar work and/or serving the same constituents, and then discuss your ideas with them. Investigate potential synergies or collaborations that would make your idea possible. (Find a Local Organization Directory at www.kpl.gov/ONEplace)

Your **third step** is to start making a positive impact right now! There are many alternatives to the long, drawn-out process of starting a nonprofit. You could:

1. **Volunteer** – Volunteer for an organization that is doing something similar to what you have in mind. You could join their board or even take a job. This experience will focus your ideas and interests as well as build your skills. More info at volunteerkalamazoo.org
2. **Form or join a giving circle** – Gather a group of people who wish to pool their time and money to benefit a local charity.
3. **Organize an unincorporated association** – Put together an unincorporated association to fulfill your mission without seeking tax-exempt status.

These first three steps will take weeks – probably months. But they are **ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY**. During this time, you will:

- Meet and learn from wonderful people who are doing what you want to do
- Refine your skills and focus your ideas
- Face the day-to-day, year-to-year reality of running an organization

Your **fourth step** is to visit <http://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/forming-nonprofit-corporation-michigan-36070.html>. Read carefully through each step and the other resources linked on the page.

Once you have finished this step, set an appointment with ONEplace@kpl staff to discuss your future: call 269-553-7910 or email ONEplace@kpl.gov.